

# EACC NEWS

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The East Asia Christian Conference is an organ of continuing fellowship and co-operation among the Churches and Christian Councils in East Asia.

Secretary for Information: Ruth K. Cadwallader

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## THEOLOGICAL EDUCATORS EXAMINE NEW METHODS

SEOUL - "The widespread crisis of faith and the search for meaning in life; the urgent issues of human development and social justice; and the dialectic between universal technological civilization and local cultural and religious situations are to be responded to in undertaking the church's ministry and expression of the gospel", according to Dr. S. K. Coe, Associate Director of the Theological Education Fund as he referred to its "Third Mandate".

He was addressing the North East Asia Association of Theological Schools at their second Assembly which met in Seoul from May 3-4 with some forty-four theological educators and consultants from related agencies.

The Rev. C. Ma Lagunzad, Jr., the Executive Coordinator for the Inter-Seminary Programme for Field Educators for the South East Asia Association of Theological Schools, said that theological education must seek to have a living encounter with the concrete realities of the world in which God has placed the church and therefore must seek the full implication of Bonhoeffer's statement, "Only in the midst of the world is Christ." He declared that the issues of field education is linked with the call for a new revolutionized theological education, geared to the contemporary world, and to the very mission and life of the people of God in human development and nation building.

U Kyaw Than, EACC, urged the educators to involve lay people and selected students in the deliberations about theological education, maintaining that it has to deal with the crises and challenges of contemporary society and therefore must be the responsibility of the broader church.

The NEATTS met with participants from Taiwan, Japan and Korea at the Christian Academy House in Seoul. A study conference ending May 7 followed the meeting.

Dr. Yoshiro Ishida, Japan, and Dr. Yong Ok Kim, Korea, Co-Directors of NEATTS, planned the conference.

## RESPONSE TO PLIGHT OF EAST PAKISTAN

BANGKOK - Three weeks after the crisis following the breakdown of talks at Dacca between President Yahya Khan and Sheikh Mujib, leader of the Awami League, the EACC Secretary for ICAMS, Mr. Samuel Isaac, travelled to make a preliminary study of the developing refugee situation.

Mr. Isaac and U Kyaw Than, the General Secretary, are closely following events in East Pakistan, studying the implications of the complex international situation in which it is set, with a view to taking actions of long-term assistance in this time of tragedy and crisis for the Pakistani nation.

The World Council of Churches Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service cabled US\$37,000 for immediate emergency assistance for East Pakistan refugees crossing into India. Soon after Mr. Isaac's preliminary visit EACC forwarded to CASA, the relief and development agency of the National Christian Council of India, a token sum of US\$500 for relief work among these refugees.

CASA, which has operated in the area for many years, and is well-experienced in refugee work, is working in many relief camps set up on the India-Pakistan

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border in Longaon area to care for one million refugees. They report: "The continuing flow of refugees is making it difficult to keep pace. Upon arrival refugees are being registered and cards issued to each family. All children are being given small-pox vaccinations."

Mr. Isaac, in looking to future needs, said: "The large number of people now moving into India represent grave needs, and the magnitude of these needs will sharply increase in the next few weeks. Control of epidemics may be one of the major needs at the moment, apart from the urgent need for shelter as the monsoon starts. In addition, the need for clothing, food, and projects for occupying their time usefully will be very necessary. There will be need for organizers and volunteers to set up a systematic relief programme."

EACC General Secretary had also been in touch with churchmen in Pakistan who were themselves seeking to make their Christian contribution in the situation facing the nation. Attempts are being made to secure on the spot advice from the East Pakistan Christian Council and to seek responses from the Pakistan authorities for rendering relief to the needy.

#### TA UPU PERE TO SUCCEED S. TUILOVONI AS PACIFIC SECRETARY

PACIFIC - Chaired by an able church woman of Samoa, Mrs. Fetaui Mata'afa, the Pacific Conference of Churches elected Rev. Ta Upu Pere of Cook Islands, a Presbyterian minister presently serving the Pacific Islanders in Wellington, New Zealand, to be the Secretary of the region for the next five years. Rev. Ta Upu Pere will succeed Rev. S. A. Tuilovoni, the Methodist minister from Fiji who had served the Conference since its first Assembly five years ago.

Punctuated by Kava ceremonies, whale-tooth presentations and entertainments featuring grass-skirted dancers, the Conference of Churches concluded its second Assembly on 15th May at Davuilevu, Fiji Islands, marking a historic development in the process of cooperation among the churches in the south Pacific region. The Hon. Ratu Sir E. Cakobau, KBE, M.C., ED, Fiji's Minister for Labour, and descendant of the former Paramount-Chief in Fiji, opened the Assembly.

Barely a year after the independence of Fiji, the islands caught the lime-light again in hosting this ecumenical assembly attended by a hundred Christian leaders and observers drawn not only from the islands scattered in the south Pacific but also from Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Asia, Africa and North America.

Gathered under the theme: "God's Purpose for His People", the participants were led in Bible Study by Dr. H. F. Hanlin of Caroline Islands and divided into commissions to consider the issues confronting the churches in the areas of Faith, Mission, Service and Unity.

The Assembly also decided to strengthen the ongoing programmes of the Pacific Conference of Churches particularly in the fields of Christian Education, Communication and Family Life. The two new programme emphases were indicated in terms of faith and action; and church and society.

Rev. Philip Potter of West Indies and Dr. A.A. Brash of New Zealand, directors of Divisions of Mission and of Service respectively of the World Council of Churches, were the preachers at a public rally in Albert Park of Suva City. U Kyaw Than of EACC was the preacher at the closing service of the Assembly.

#### MURRAY ROGERS LEAVES INDIA

EACC - Murray Rogers, EACC Secretary for Inter-Faith Dialogue, passed through Bangkok, May 14 - 16, on his way to Hong Kong where he will take part in the WCC Consultation of Study Centre Directors.

Having had his home in Jyotiniketan Ashram (an Indian form of community) for the last 17 years, and before that in the Agricultural Institute, Allahabad, and Mahatma Gandhi's ashram in Sevagram, since 1946, Fr. Rogers and the small group

to which he belongs have been called to Jerusalem.

They rejoice that Jyotiniketan Ashram is now entirely in Indian hands, led by a Franciscan priest, Swami Dinabandhu. "It is not without significance perhaps that our hopes and prayers for India leadership in this simple life of prayer, silence and friendship, were only answered when we were ready to die out! Might that be true in other situations of the Church in Asia?" Murray Rogers asks.

In Jerusalem the Community has been asked to live a similar life of contemplation and friendship while Fr. Rogers is to be Chaplain to the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem for ecumenical and inter-faith spirituality. Archbishop George Appleton, who had lived in Burma for many years and has been deeply influenced by Buddhism, sees the need for a window in the City of Jerusalem to be opened towards eastern spiritualities and for a little Christian family or community to have this as their special responsibility.

"We ask for your prayers, and hope there may be a flow (in both directions) of interest, information and prayer between the churches of Asia related to the EACC and the City of the Lord's Resurrection." Fr. Murray Rogers himself has been asked by the Continuation Committee to be the Inter-Faith Secretary of the EACC until the next Assembly.

#### INDIA'S YOUTH ASSEMBLY

MADRAS - "Let Us Rise Up and Build" was the theme of the National Christian Youth Assembly which ended on May 4 at Bains School in Madras, India.

The all-India assembly brought youth representatives from some fifty churches, councils and Christian agencies in India and a wide variety of different communions including Roman Catholics, Baptists and Mar Thoma Syrians. It was sponsored by the youth committee of the National Christian Council of India.

The programme was designed to sharpen the picture of what is happening to youth in India and around the world as well as to "attune our ears more truly to hear what God is saying", according to the Rev. R. Robert Cunville, Youth Secretary of the National Christian Council of India.

Dr. Mary Verghese, one of the great examples of a life of complete surrender and dedication, inaugurated the Assembly. She is the Head of the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department at Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore. Brother Michael Frere of Taize Community, Taize, France, led the daily devotional times.

Bishop Leslie Newbigin presented the Bible Study on the theme from Nehemiah and afternoons were spent in seven commissions where imperative issues were exposed and discussed. The young people grappled with rural and urban development; the role of the university in changing India; service projects, arts and communication; and political ideology and the role of the progressive youth in the servant church.

Leaders for the commissions included outstanding leaders in these fields from within India. Youth were challenged toward concrete action in the situations to which they returned.

Mr. Victor Pandian, Secretary-Treasurer of the National Christian Youth Assembly, writing on the event said, "We are a nation on the verge of a great social and economic change and therefore it has become more and more urgent and important for a meaningful responsibility of youth both in the church and the nation. To serve the purpose of God in this world involves conflict and struggle. The success of the Madras Assembly will be known only as delegates go back to their societies 'with a mind to work' and say 'Yes, we will rise up and build.'"

#### CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE - "MOUNTAIN OF GLORY"

DJAKARTA - "In interpreting God's word in Christ Jesus in the context of our national problem and at the point of our people's needs, we witness most truly and

effectively to the truth and the reality of the Gospel", declared Mr. T. K. Thomas, EACC Literature Secretary, Madras, India, as he spoke at the formal opening of the Badan Penerbit Kristen (Christian Publishing House) in Djakarta on May 3, 1971.

B.P.K. headquarters will now be housed in an impressive new building located at Kwitang 22 in Djakarta and was opened in the presence of a distinguished gathering of church and society leaders.

The new bookshop is spacious and beautiful; it is said to be the best bookshop in the whole country. The change of name to Badan Penerbit Kristan Gunung Mulia--Mountain of Glory Christian Publishing House--marks a new vision and a new commitment.

B.P.K. is one of the most creative Christian publishing concerns in the whole East Asia region, according to T. K. Thomas. It has made a significant contribution to the life of the Indonesian church. It has a rich and varied publishing programme, a modern printing press, a central bookshop in Djakarta and a network of distribution centres throughout the nation.

The colorful opening function was attended by church leaders and representatives from related agencies in Indonesia and abroad. Dr. Soritua Nababan, General Secretary and Dr. T.B. Simatupang, Associate Chairman of the National Christian Council of Indonesia addressed the group.

Mr. Thomas in conveying the greetings and good wishes of the EACC said, "We pray that God will enable you to go ahead with this task, with commitment, relevance and hope. And in this task of yours we assure you of our prayerful support and cooperation. May you be enabled to strengthen the Church to be truly the Servant Church of our Servant Lord."

#### STUDY CENTRE DIRECTORS CONSIDER INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE

HONG KONG - "The Christian task is to enter into dialogue which offers a helpful opportunity for the renewal of that truly religious quest which Christians believe to be fulfilled by God in Jesus Christ. Christianity is to lead into a closer relationship with all men", so read a statement guiding the Consultation of the Directors of Christian Study Centres sponsored by the World Council of Churches which met in Hong Kong from May 17 - 22.

Twenty-five participants from Asia, Africa and Latin America, meeting at Tao Fong Shan, a Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religions and Culture in Hong Kong, critically evaluated the work they are doing, explored new lines of development and new approaches for study.

In multi-religious societies, religious boundaries tend to be sanctified and perpetuated by tradition and religions themselves become walls of separation rather than bridges of understanding between people, according to Dr. S. J. Samartha, Director of Dialogue with Men of Living Faiths and Ideologies of the World Council of Churches. "It is the task of Christians to meet other religions in openness and respect. They will not deny their own identity but at the same time venture into a new encounter with truth."

Study Centres, whose chief function is the study of religion, culture and society of the countries or regions in which they are situated, were set up after the Second World War and now number some twenty.

Dr. M. M. Thomas, Director of the Christian Institute for the Study for Religion and Society, Bangalore, India, was one of the participants and delivered a public lecture "Christianity in an Asian Crisis" on Wednesday, May 19, at the City Hall.

IN A WORD. . .

- Fr. C. Murray Rogers' address will be c/o St. George's Close, P. O. Box 1248, Jerusalem, ISRAEL.



# ASIAN CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Vietnam  
Laos  
Cambodia

## Newsletter

June 1, 1971

Director: Samuel M. Isaac

Information: Ruth K. Cadwallader

sign of christian presence

### SPECIAL PROJECTS JOINTLY WITH CATHOLICS

SAIGON - Joint projects to meet social needs in Vietnam are being explored by Asian Christian Service and the Roman Catholics.

On April 23, Mr. Samuel Isaac, Director of ACS; Mr. Masaichi Yamashita, ACS Field Director for Vietnam; and Mr. Doan Thanh Liem, member of the ACS Programme Advisory Committee in Vietnam, met with the Most Reverend Paulus Nguyen Van Binh, D.D., the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Saigon and Chairman of the Episcopal Council of Vietnam.

Archbishop Binh was very gracious in his conversations and was keenly desirous that both the Roman Catholic Church and ACS should develop possibilities for joint projects in Vietnam to meet social concerns and needs.

An informal committee of Roman Catholics and ACS has been suggested which would explore possibilities for the joint projects. The ACS has asked the following people to work on the committee: Mr. Vu Duc Chang, Tin Lanh Evangelical Church and Chairman of the ACS Vietnam Programme Advisory Committee; Mr. Masaichi Yamashita; Mr. Nguyen Van Ninh, a Mennonite and a Director of Vietnam Christian Service and a member of the Advisory Committee; Mr. Tran-Ngoc-Bau, ACS Vietnam Project Officer; Miss Tran Thi Ngan, ACS Vietnam Programme Administrator, and Mr. Doan Thanh Liem. It is expected that the Archbishop will propose the names of Roman Catholic members for the exploratory committee.

Christians, working together on joint projects for and with the masses of Vietnamese people, mostly Buddhists, are called upon to be the catalyst for real community involvement of Christians in the society of Vietnam.

### BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT - TO VAN DUC

Last year at this time To Van Duc at seventeen enjoyed the gift of being able to move around freely. He could run, jump, play and work, and he would help his mother with the problems of resettling and living in a strange place. In the new life they had been forced to live in Lai Thieu, a resettlement community about twenty kilometers from Saigon, perhaps the time would come when he could go to school again.

When the Asian Christian Service team of nurses and social workers came to Lai Thieu in January, To Van Duc was lying on a bare wooden bed wistfully looking out the door of the little hut and wondering how soon he could die. He was unable to walk or sit. He could not even take care of the embarrassing personal needs other people take for granted. He would never be able to help himself in case of a mortar attack to crawl into the bunker--a hole dug in the middle of the floor of the hut and covered with boards and sandbags! He was growing thinner and more melancholy each day as he watched his once supple limbs become thin, weak and useless.

In the little cottage with the two decorated procelain elephants guarding the door--a symbol of the life they had known in the village before--at the end of a long line of similar huts in the hamlet, To and his mother eked out a meager living selling water in oil beeps to the neighbours from a waterpump close by their house. His mother, a very small woman with a careworn face, now spent much of her time trying to take care of him, but they had been more hopeful when they had first come close to Saigon where it was said to be safe to live. Even here one could not be sure and a home defense corps was needed.

One night while on duty, To had stepped on a land mine. He was taken to the hospital where he received immediate treatment and when he had healed sufficiently, though permanently disabled, he was released. His legs were rendered useless, he had no control of bodily functions, and his chest pained from the injuries. The hospital said there was nothing more they could do for him and "furthermore others need this bed--people who can recover."

When Doris de Silva and Cu-Thi-Trong, social workers with the ACS team, discovered To they found he had large, painful bed sores and sought to do all they could to help him. The nurses, Dorothy Sands and Tran-Thi-Huong, rallied to his need also. They brought foam rubber mattress and pillows; medication for the sores, vitamins, ointments and reading material. They arranged ways that his mother and he could more easily care for his needs. They encouraged him to try. They took him to a hospital again only to be told the same thing he had been told before.

And they brought him a priceless gift--the gift of caring! That they cared and could and could help him.

I went to Lai Thieu the day that Dr. George Pradhan, volunteer from South India, went with the team at their request to see To. Dr. Pradhan who has served with ACS at both Cai Be and Bao Loc, gently feeling his thin legs and probing his chest, gave To a thorough examination. Then he said, "We must think of this boy's whole life--his body of course but also of his mind and spirit. He feels hopeless and needs something to occupy his thoughts and something to do. Also a strict schedule for therapy for himself."

The doctor proceeded to show the boy how he could 'swim on the bed'--though he could hardly move; he made him reach as far as he could and instructed his mother that she should do nothing for him that he could possibly do himself. He put the water glass almost beyond his reach so that he would stretch the atrophying muscles.

He instructed the nurses and social workers to hang a towel over the rafters of the hut to make a rope so that he could pull himself up to turn over and try to sit up. In this way he could help the bed sores to heal. He asked that knitting needles and yarn be brought to To and someone to teach him how to knit, and he could do something to help supplement the family income. Dr. Pradhan said that later a wheel chair would be in order and that a transistor radio would be important so that he could forget himself and become more involved in living.

ACS could manage to provide these things through Victor Srivivasan, the Relief Officer of ACS, also present. But the most important ingredient had already been inserted into a lonely, helpless and hopeless existence.

One could see that a special feeling existed between the team workers and the young boy whom they had been to visit almost daily since he had been discovered. The ACS team was leaving Lai Thieu for other work--Dorothy for home in Australia, the others for other work. The news of To and the plan for his provision would be passed on to the Clinic nurses and the YMCA workers who has a Centre there.

One could wonder about what the prospects were of a future for To Van Duc. Just how would he and his mother and family survive? How many undiscovered To's are there left by the carnage of this war?

Asian Christian Service is doing this kind of small but priceless service!

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- R.C. -

SIGNS--a twelve page pamphlet with pictures, stories and poems will tell you the story of Asian Christian Service, and WHAT IS ASIAN CHRISTIAN SERVICE?--a flier giving the history and purpose and how you can help in this work in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, NOW available from EACC, 14/2 Pramuan Road, Bangkok.